



May 16, 2016

Ozone House Supports HB 5649 & HB 5650

Dear Legislators:

I write on behalf of Ozone House to urge you to enact the proposed life-saving Good Samaritan Expansion (HB 5649-5650).

When someone in America overdoses, a call for help occurs **less than 50% of the time**. The most common reason for not seeking help is fear of repercussion from law enforcement. With opioid overdose in Michigan at epidemic levels, HB 5649-5650 should be enacted as quickly as possible to prevent further unnecessary death. These deaths are preventable.

Ozone House helps homeless and runaway youth in Washtenaw County lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. Our intensive counseling, crisis intervention, housing, shelter, and employment programs help youth to build on their strengths and create healthy and productive goals for themselves. In response to what appears to be a surge in drug use—especially opioid use—in our community, we recently launched a program to screen youth for risk of substance use disorders so that we can connect them to services they need to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. We recognize substance use disorders as public health issues, not criminal justice issues, and we urge you to remove barriers that our fellow Michiganders face when reaching out to save the life of someone in an overdose.

With this legislation, Michigan will join the current practice of over 32 states in protecting the health of its citizens. The bipartisan legislation sponsored by Reps. Pscholka and Singh as written best effectuates the goals of a Good Samaritan law ("medical amnesty") law. The scourge of opioid addiction and abuse poses a serious threat to our citizens; we must encourage them to call for help in emergencies to save lives of people in an overdose. In these cases, death is preventable; please remove all barriers that our citizens face in reaching out for help during an overdose.

Thank you for your support on this life-or-death issue. Any questions you may have about our support for expanded Good Samaritan laws are warmly welcomed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Doyle", written over a horizontal line.

Katie Doyle
Executive Director